



## NOTE TO PANELISTS:

Thank you for agreeing to serve on a grant review panel. This document will provide answers to your questions regarding panel service.

Since 1966, hundreds of artists, arts administrators, scholars and arts educators have served as SDAC panelists, generously contributing their time, energy, and passion toward this important application review process. We welcome you to this distinguished group and thank you for your dedication to the arts.

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## AT THE SOUTH DAKOTA ARTS COUNCIL, WE BELIEVE:

### **MISSION.**

The mission of the South Dakota Arts Council is to make quality arts programs accessible throughout the state through funds, services, and information.

### **VISION.**

Our vision is to transform South Dakota's communities and people through the arts. We see deeper public awareness broadening appreciation for the fine arts; better arts education reviving school environments; wider access to the arts fostering understanding among cultures; and artists and arts organizations enhancing the quality of life for all South Dakotans.

### **FUTURE.**

In 2017 the South Dakota Arts Council introduced a new strategic plan to be carried through our Fiscal Year 2020 (June 30, 2020). Our focus is on equity. Through the next year, we will strive to shift our work from equal to equitable through policy, process, and practice. We seek to develop a sustainable equity practice through access, inclusion, diversity, and equality. Our overarching goal, "Striving for Equity," takes us in a new direction with our plan. Three driving forces guide us through our plan: learn, connect, progress.

To help you understand our intention as we move forward, we encourage you to review our complete [\*Strategic Plan\*](#). Use this plan as a guide to evaluate how grant proposals incorporate our mission and goals to advance the arts.

# YOUR ROLE AS A PANELIST

Your responsibilities as a panelist are to review application materials, score them, comment on their quality and merit based on the mandated review criteria, and participate in the panel discussion.

The applications included in the GoSmart online system were received by the March 1 deadline, and South Dakota Arts Council (SDAC) staff has deemed these applications eligible for panel review. Panelists will review and score all of the applications assigned to their panel using the GoSmart online system and participate in a conference call to determine a funding recommendation to the South Dakota Arts Council.

Panel schedules are currently being arranged by SDAC staff members who will contact you directly to set panelist meetings.

Applicants will be notified of funding decisions, and the official public grant announcement will be posted at on the [South Dakota Arts Council's](#) website in June, pending our grant notification from the National Endowment for the Arts.

**Application deadline:** March 1, 2020

**Panel review process:** March 6 – April 13, 2020

**Panel Meeting (via conference call):** Week of April 13, 2020

**SDAC Spring Meeting:** Wednesday, May 6, 2020

**Announcement of award or rejection:** June 1, 2020

**Beginning date of grant period/fiscal year:** July 1, 2020

# BEFORE THE PANEL MEETING/REVIEWING APPLICATIONS

All panelists will review, score, and comment on all applications assigned to their panel. Based on our experience with recent panels, we estimate the review time for each application (reading the narratives, reviewing the work samples and support documentation, and entering scores and comments) will take an average of 60 minutes per application.

In your analysis, please address all components of each application. You should assess the strengths and weaknesses of each application based on the Review Criteria of Artistic Excellence and Artistic Merit included in this document.

Your comments provide the basis for staff feedback to the applicants, so it is important that your evaluative comments are thorough and accurately reflect your scores. Be sure to include in your comments and assessment of the work samples and any supplementary materials included in an application. Brief comments in bullet point format are acceptable; there is no need for lengthy paragraphs.

Applications assigned to your panel were received by the application deadline and SDAC staff has deemed these applications eligible for panel review. It is up to panelists to evaluate the diverse range of projects against the application requirements detailed in the Grant Guidelines (detailed in the online [Guide to Grants](#)) with regard to the [Review Criteria](#) of Artistic Excellence and Artistic Merit.

The application review process is not open to the public. Your work relating to application review should be kept confidential. Do not share any application material, including work samples and/or supplementary materials, with anyone outside the panel, including family members, friends, or colleagues. If you print or download application/work sample material, please make sure the material is secure and destroy/delete the material after you have completed your review.

If you have questions about an application, please contact SDAC staff listed at the beginning of this document. Please do not contact an organization or artist about an application; doing so would be a breach of the confidential review process.

# PANELIST TOOLS

## GRANT PANELIST PORTAL

The South Dakota Arts Council has created several resources to assist grant panelists in using the online grant system and reviewing grant applications. These materials, along with all resources listed here can be found online at

<https://artscouncil.sd.gov/about/FY21panelportal.aspx>

## ONLINE GRANT SYSTEM

The South Dakota Arts Council uses GOSmart for our online grant system. This is where panelists review applications, work samples, and supplemental materials online in advance of the panel meeting. Panelists will also use the online grant system to score each application and provide comments as they review the online material. SDAC staff will provide your log-in credentials. Login online at

<https://admin.gosmart.org/login.php>

## GUIDE TO GRANTS

The SDAC's Guide to Grants (included in this document and online) includes grant guidelines, criteria, and eligibility for all grant categories. If you have questions about the grant category and requirements, you will find the answers in the Guide to Grants. This document is posted online at

[https://artscouncil.sd.gov/grants/2021\\_Guide\\_to\\_Grants.pdf](https://artscouncil.sd.gov/grants/2021_Guide_to_Grants.pdf)

## SOUTH DAKOTA ARTS COUNCIL'S STRATEGIC PLAN

Online at <https://artscouncil.sd.gov/about/18SDACPlan.pdf>. Use this plan as a guide to evaluate how grant proposals incorporate our mission and goals to advance the arts. This document is posted online at

<https://artscouncil.sd.gov/about/18SDACPlan.pdf>

# NAVIGATING THE ONLINE GRANT SYSTEM

When the grant website comes up you will be asked to enter the User Name and Password that have been provided to you by Kate Vandel via email.

Here are a few resources for using and navigating the GoSmart online grant system:

[New Panelist Tutorial \(PDF Document\)](#) \*\*A great resource for all panelists

[Panelist Login \(Video Runtime 0:40\)](#)

[Select Your Panel \(Video Runtime 0:51\)](#)

[Panel Dashboard \(Video Runtime 1:08\)](#)

[Panel Dashboard: Application Details \(Video Runtime 2:56\)](#)

If you need additional support with the online grant system, contact Kate Vandel at 605-773-3301.

If you have questions specific to a grant application you are reviewing, contact the staff member assigned to your panel. SDAC staff contact information is listed at the beginning of this document.

# REVIEW CRITERIA

All applications must be evaluated according to their Artistic Excellence and Artistic Merit.

## Artistic Excellence

- Quality of the artists, arts organizations, arts education providers, works of art, or services that the project will involve, as appropriate.
- Artistic significance of the project.

## Artistic Merit

- Extent to which the project deepens and extends the arts value, including the ability to foster new connections and to exemplify creativity and innovation. This includes how the project may:
  - Prove transformative with the potential for meaningful change;
  - Be distinctive by offering fresh insights and new value for the field and/or the public through unconventional solutions; and
  - Be shared and/or emulated or lead to other advances in the field.
- Potential to achieve results consistent with SDAC major goals. (To best understand our priorities, goals, and strategies, review our Strategic Plan online at <https://artscouncil.sd.gov/about/18SDACPlan.pdf>).
- Appropriateness of the proposed performance measurements and their ability to demonstrate that the selected SDAC objective was achieved.
- Potential impact on artists (including evidence of direct payment), the artistic field, and the organization's community.
- Appropriateness of the project to the organization's mission, audience, community, and/or constituency.
- Plans for documentation, evaluation, and dissemination of the project results, as appropriate.
- Ability to carry out the project based on such factors as the appropriateness of the budget, the quality and clarity of the project goals and design, the resources involved, and the qualifications of the project's personnel.
- Where appropriate, potential to reach underserved populations such as those whose opportunities to experience the arts are limited by geography, ethnicity, economics, or disability.
- Extent to which a project is inclusive of individuals from all demographic backgrounds of the community, and physical and cognitive abilities; and where applicable, the extent to which a project specifically addresses the issue of inclusion.

# REVIEW TIPS

As you review applications and work samples, craft comments, and assign preliminary scores, please remember applicants benefit from panelists' clear indications of strengths and weaknesses. Your comments will assist the South Dakota Arts Council staff when we debrief applicants.

## **General Review**

### ***Do:***

- Base your review and comments only on the published review criteria for this applicant category.
- Provide specific strengths and weakness of the project; note unanswered questions or confusing information.
- Make evaluative (rather than descriptive) statements.
- Evaluate each application on its own excellence and merits.
- Consider videos, images, and other work samples that illustrate important strengths or weaknesses.

### ***Please Do Not:***

- Import personal criteria into the evaluation or discussion.
- Compare applicants to one another to help you with evaluation.

## **Regarding: Artistic Excellence**

### ***Do:***

- Comment specifically on work samples, including the caliber of artists, arts teaching and learning, and what additional evidence of excellence might be helpful.
- Consider qualifications and excellence of artists separately.
- Articulate the excellence evident in and artistry, as well as education, outreach and access, and community service as it pertains to each application.

## **Regarding: Artistic Merit**

### ***Do:***

- Highlight particularly strong project components, e.g., planning, assessment, evaluation.
- Recognize the artist's or organization's ability to carry out the plans.
- Assess qualifications of artist, arts professionals and additional staff.
- Comment on selected outcome(s) and plans to measure outcome success.
- Comment on impact that is significant to SDAC major goals.
- Comment on "fit" between applicant and program.

## **Keep in Mind**

- Financial need is not a criterion. Organizations with small budgets should not be given greater consideration, and organizations with large budgets should not be penalized.
- Projects do not have to be new.

# POLICIES FOR GRANT SUPPORT

The South Dakota Arts Council has established policies regarding categories of grant support requiring special attention or clarification. Over the years, the following policies have been adopted:

**Professionalism.** Rather than attempting to define the term “professional artist,” the consensus of the Council is that the basis for awarding grants to artists shall be the quality of the artist’s work (as provided and presented within the application).

**Support of resident artists and South Dakota arts organizations.** The Council recognizes the crucial role of South Dakota’s artists and arts organizations. Priority is given to those projects involving South Dakota artists and arts organizations, though proposals including out-of-state parties may be considered.

**Continuing grants.** Projects do not need to be new. Continuing support may be awarded to an organization, but previous support should not weigh on panelist scoring.

**Accessibility.** All events funded by the South Dakota Arts Council (SDAC) must be accessible to persons with disabilities, including accommodations for those with visual, hearing, mobility, and learning impairments.

The SDAC does not discriminate against any person on the grounds of race, color, national origin, sex, or physical or mental disability. The Council has the responsibility of ensuring that all programs using federal funds allocated by SDAC are equally accessible to all people. The Council adheres to federal Fair Labor Standards and non-discrimination guidelines stated in Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act. The Council requires that those accepting SDAC grant money also comply with these guidelines.

**Arts Expansion and Equity.** In addition, the Council strives to build active cultural participation with all ethnic and minority groups, particularly American Indians living in the state through the Council's Arts Expansion policy statements:

The Council promotes the development of artistic work and presentations suited to the state's diverse resources and needs of small towns and geographically isolated areas.

Educational opportunities at the state's post-secondary institutions are encouraged and supported for the development of artists to work in South Dakota.

The Council strives to encourage private and public-sector support of cultural development, planning, and funding of the arts in South Dakota.

The Council seeks to remove social, economic, and physical barriers to cultural activities to ensure that all citizens have a role in cultural policy and decision-making.